Concord Board of Education Committee Minutes

Joint City Council/School Board Committee

School Board Committee: Joint City Council / School Board

Date: November 21, 2008

Committee Members Present: Chris Casko, Martin Honigberg, Kass Ardinge

Other Board Members Present: Betty Hoadley

Administrators: Matt Cashman, Michele Croteau

City Council Committee Members Present: Keith Nyhan, City Council Ward 7; J. Allen Bennett, City Council Ward 6; Dan St. Hilaire, City Council At Large; Tom Aspell, City Manager; Fred Keach, City Council Ward 10 and Chief Barry, City Police Department

Others: Various community members including Susan Fielding of 33 Liberty, Pat Dahme of 104 School Street, Erin Stuart of 102 School Street and representatives from the First Congregational Church, South Congregational Church and the McKenna House

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

Agenda:
1. School Resource Officer
2. GASB 45
3. School District Budget
4. City Tax Base Projection 2010
5. Request to use Dewey School as a Shelter

School Resource Officer
This agenda item was requested by Merrimack Valley School District. It was withdrawn from the agenda as no one from MV was present at the meeting. Concord School Board members requested a copy of the calculation detailing the amount charged to MV.

GASB 45
Pronouncement 45 issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board established new requirements for governmental entities regarding the valuation and disclosure of post-retirement benefits. Jim Howard indicated that the City is in the second phase of its review.
The estimated unfunded accrued liability is in the vicinity of $50+ million. In an effort to reduce this cost, retirees 65 years old and over were moved to a Medicare Advantage plan. The City is now looking into the creation of a special funding vehicle through an irrevocable trust. This would allow the use of a greater discount provision currently not available in the State of New Hampshire.

**School District Budget**
Michele Croteau reviewed the changes to the School District budget from the vote in March, 2008 to the meeting in November, 2008 to finalize the budget. The tax rate was set at an increase of 2.48% over the prior year. Betty Hoadley spoke about the process and timing for the District to finalize its budget. She stressed the importance of planning for next year to establish a schedule that meets the deadlines and that works for both the City and the School District.

**City Tax Base Projection 2010**
Jim Howard talked about the projection that was done this past May. Real growth was projected at 1%. The 5-year projection will be updated by January 10, 2009. This past year, real growth came in at 1.6% versus the 1.3% that had been anticipated. Jim explained that no real growth is expected until 2010. Tom Aspell recommends that the current year’s tax base be used for budgeting purposes for next year. Mr. Howard will forward a copy of the most recent analysis of the assessed valuation to Ms. Croteau. The City’s most recent tax rate was an increase of 4+%, primarily due to decreased revenues.

**Request to use Dewey School as a Shelter**
Mayor Jim Bouley started by explaining the increased demand for overnight shelter for families. He thanked School Board members for entertaining the request. Much discussion followed with various questions and concerns raised by all parties present. The following is a list of some of the points made at the meeting:

- Current homeless shelters in Concord are already at capacity.
- The structure of the existing shelters in the City was reviewed.
- The Mayor does not see this as the City’s project and stated that “the City does not have any funds to allocate to this project.”
- The School District’s role in the project would be solely that of a landlord if the project moves forward. The School District does not have any funds to allot to this project and would require reimbursement for costs incurred if the building were used for this purpose.
- Neighborhood meetings run by the Mayor would be necessary to hear from the community regarding this request and answer questions from community members.
- Request is to use facility as a temporary shelter for 100 days in the winter only and no longer than that period of time as well, as this is *only* for this winter, 2008–2009.
• This is a one-year request. To avoid this issue in subsequent years, a long-term solution needs to be developed now.
• There is a need to determine who will run the shelter and what organization will be responsible for cost of utilities, security, etc.
• Matt Cashman toured the facility with the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief did not indicate there were any issues that would prevent the building from being used for this temporary purpose.
• Issues of how the costs would be covered for insurance coverage, non-compliance with ADA, parking, snow removal, and general maintenance and security of the facility were also discussed.

It was determined that an initial meeting should be held to determine a list of potential issues surrounding this request, so that information will be available to respond to the community’s questions at a neighborhood meeting. A brown-bag lunch (bring your own lunch) was scheduled for 12:00 p.m. Monday, November 24 to be held at the School District Central Office on 16 Rumford Street to discuss this further. This will be posted as a School District Facilities Committee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Chris Casko, Committee Chair
Michele Croteau, Recorder